United Nations E/CN.4/2004/65–E/CN.6/2004/7

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
10 December 2003

Original: English

Commission on Human Rights
Sixtieth session
15 March-23 April 2004
Item 12 of the provisional agenda*
Integration of the human rights of women and the gender perspective

Commission on the Status of Women
Forty-eighth session
1-12 March 2004
Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda**
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": review of gender mainstreaming in entities of the United Nations system

Joint work plan of the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report contains the joint work plan of the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for the year 2004, as well as an assessment of the implementation of the work plan for 2003. It is submitted to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-eighth session and to the Commission on Human Rights at its sixtieth session, in accordance with Commission on Human Rights resolution 2003/44 of 23 April 2003.

* E/CN.4/2004/1.
** E/CN.6/2004/1.

03-65176 (E) 070104

I. Introduction

1. Based on Commission on the Status of Women resolution 39/5 of 31 March 1995 and Commission on Human Rights resolution 1997/43 of 11 April 1997, a joint work plan is prepared annually for the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (the work plan for 2003 is contained in document E/CN.4/2003/73-E/CN.6/2003/5). In its resolution 2003/44 of 23 April 2003, the Commission on Human Rights welcomed the cooperation and coordination between the Division and the Office aimed at mainstreaming women's human rights, and also welcomed the joint work plan, encouraged the Secretary-General to ensure its implementation and to continue to elaborate the plan, and requested that it be made available to the Commission on Human Rights at its sixtieth session and to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-eighth session. The present report has been prepared in accordance with that request.

II. Assessment of the implementation of the current work plan

2. During the implementation of the current joint work plan, the exchange of information between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Division for the Advancement of Women continued.

3. In the course of the year, the Division continued to suggest experts on women's rights for the training activities of the Office with respect to reporting under international human rights instruments, as well as a number of other training and technical cooperation activities. The Division and the Support Services Branch of the Office of the High Commissioner continued to work closely on reporting and other matters relating to human rights treaty bodies, including pursuant to the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387 and Corr.1).

4. The Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the High Commissioner continued to exchange documents, reports and information relating to the work of the human rights treaty bodies and circulated those documents to the chairpersons and members of the treaty bodies. The Office continued to provide information for and comments on the reports provided by the Division to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee. The Office facilitated the attendance of the Chief of the Support Services Branch at the twenty-eighth session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (13-31 January 2003) as well as the attendance of the Chairperson of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights at the same session for an exchange of views on that Committee's draft general comment on article 3 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

5. The Director of the Division and two members of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women participated in a brainstorming meeting on reform of the human rights treaty body system, organized by the Office and the Government of Liechtenstein in Malbun, Liechtenstein in May 2003. The

Division contributed to and participated in the meeting of persons chairing human rights treaty bodies, organized by the Office of the High Commissioner from 23 to 27 June 2003 in Geneva. The Chairperson of the Committee participated in that meeting. The Division also provided input to the background documentation for and participated in the second inter-committee meeting of the human rights treaty bodies, organized by the Office in Geneva from 18 to 20 June. The Chairperson and two other members of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women participated in the inter-committee meeting. The Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women addressed the Human Rights Committee at its seventy-eighth session (14 July-8 August 2003).

6. Members of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and staff of the Division for the Advancement of Women participated in workshops, organized by the Office of the High Commissioner, on reporting under human rights treaties (for example, the fourth regional workshop on the preparation and presentation of reports to international human rights treaty bodies held in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, from 28 May to 5 June 2003). Division staff and/or Committee members also took part in other activities sponsored by the Office, such as training for trainers on human rights treaty bodies (held at Geneva from 17 to 21 February 2003).

7. Office staff participated in the expert group meeting entitled "Peace agreements as a means for promoting gender equality and ensuring participation of women — a framework of model provisions", organized by the Division and held in Ottawa from 10 to 13 November 2003, and in the consultative meeting on migration and mobility and how this movement affects women, organized by the Division in Malmö, Sweden, from 2 to 4 December 2003.

8. The Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the High Commissioner continued to cooperate with regard to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Staff members of the Division and the Office remained in contact and exchanged information regarding issues arising under and procedures in connection with the Optional Protocol. The Division and the Office continued coordinating their databases and web sites, as well as updating them.

9. The Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the High Commissioner continued to support improved cooperation between the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Human Rights. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights addressed the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-seventh session (3-14 March 2003). For the first time, the Chairperson of the Commission on Human Rights also addressed the Commission on the Status of Women. The Chairpersons of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women addressed the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-ninth session (17 March-24 April 2003). The Director of the Division also addressed the Commission at that session. The Chairperson of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women participated in a panel discussion on violence against women, organized by the Office and the NGO Committee on the Status of Women on 8 April 2003. The panel was chaired by the Chairperson of the Commission on Human Rights and consisted of the Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Special Rapporteur

of the Commission on Human Rights on violence against women, its causes and consequences and the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on freedom of religion or belief.

10. The Office and the Division are facilitating the attendance of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on violence against women, its causes and consequences at the thirtieth session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (12-30 January 2004), at the invitation of the Committee. The Chief of the Support Services Branch of the Office will also meet with members of the Committee. The Division is finalizing, with the collaboration of the Office, a review of the integration of women's rights and gender perspectives in the reports of special procedures of the Commission on Human Rights between 1996 and 2003.

11. Coordination in respect of the preparation of reports to be submitted to intergovernmental bodies continued. When requested, the Division for the Advancement of Women contributed to reports prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner, and the Office contributed to reports prepared by the Division. The Division and the Office continued their efforts to streamline reporting to intergovernmental bodies.

12. The Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the High Commissioner continued to cooperate in efforts to follow up on the commitments regarding women's rights and the adoption of a gender perspective contained in the Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (Durban, South Africa, 31 August-7 September 2001). The Office continued work, in collaboration with the Division, on a revised and expanded version of the 2001 publication entitled *Gender Dimensions of Racial Discrimination* produced for the Conference. The Division contributed to the work of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

13. The Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the High Commissioner, in cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, are collaborating on a guide to human rights and legislative practices to combat trafficking in persons, especially women and children.

14. Both the Division and the Office participated in the second meeting of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (24-27 February 2003) under the leadership of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, and both participated actively in the activities of three of the network task forces: the task force on women, peace and security; the task force on gender equality and the Millennium Development Goals; and the task force on gender and trade.

III. Joint work plan for 2004

15. Cooperation between the Office of the High Commissioner and the Division for the Advancement of Women will continue in 2004 to strengthen attention to the human rights of women and the mainstreaming of gender perspectives in all human rights activities in the following major areas: support for human rights treaty bodies; support for intergovernmental bodies and special procedures; technical cooperation,

advisory services and meetings; awareness-raising and outreach; and inter-agency cooperation. The major activities planned in those areas are outlined below.

A. Support for human rights treaty bodies

16. The Office of the High Commissioner and the Division for the Advancement of Women will continue the practice of past years of coordination, cooperation and information exchange between treaty bodies. Activities will include the exchange of documents, reports and the results of the work of the treaty bodies, and the circulation of those documents to the chairpersons and members of the treaty bodies; follow-up to the recommendations of the 15th meeting of chairpersons of human rights treaty bodies and the points of agreement of the second inter-committee meeting, including development of proposals for an expanded core document and harmonized reporting guidelines; and participation of senior officials of the two offices in selected meetings of treaty bodies.

17. The Division for the Advancement of Women will contribute to the preparations and conduct of the 16th meeting of persons chairing human rights treaty bodies from 21 to 25 June 2004, the third inter-committee meeting from 21 to 22 June 2004, and any ad hoc meetings in relation to the work of the treaty bodies that may be convened during 2004. The Division, the Chairperson and designated members of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women will participate in those meetings.

18. Exchange of information and collaboration will continue among staff of the Office and the Division, as well as designated Committee members, with regard to communications and inquiry procedures.

B. Support for intergovernmental bodies and special procedures

19. The Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the High Commissioner will continue the established practice of cooperation in areas including support for the participation of the Chairpersons of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Human Rights in the respective sessions of the Commissions, as well as of the participation of the Chairperson of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women; and the convening of a proposed joint meeting of the bureaux of the Commissions, via videoconference, possibly in March 2004. Senior officials of the two offices are again expected to address the respective commissions, including in any panel discussion that may be organized in conjunction with sessions of the Commissions.

20. Cooperation will be enhanced in the preparation of reports on similar issues to be submitted to intergovernmental bodies, such as those relating to trafficking in women and girls and to violence against women. Inputs and comments will be sought and provided for other reports, such as the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan, the situation of and assistance to Palestinian women, and the integration of the human rights of women and the gender perspective. The Division will continue to provide targeted input for the work of special procedures.

C. Technical cooperation, advisory services, and meetings

21. In the area concerned, the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the High Commissioner will improve early information exchange and coordination on technical cooperation activities and cooperate whenever possible in such activities, especially in respect of training activities on reporting under international human rights instruments and of follow-up to concluding comments; and cooperate in preparing and piloting training packages on international human rights instruments.

22. The Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Division for the Advancement of Women will collaborate in the implementation of the plan of action on strengthening human rights-related United Nations action at the country level: national human rights promotion and protection systems, developed by the Office of the High Commissioner in cooperation with the United Nations Development Group and the Executive Committee for Humanitarian Affairs, pursuant to the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change (A/57/387 and Corr.1).

23. The Division and the Office will jointly organize a workshop, in proximity to the meeting of the special procedures office holders in June 2004, on the integration of gender perspectives into the work of the thematic mandates, based on the review conducted by the Division in 2003.

24. In 2004, the Division and the Office will organize jointly a meeting of national human rights institutions and national machineries for the advancement of women on strategies to address the elimination of sex discrimination, with the participation of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

D. Awareness raising and outreach

25. Efforts in the area will focus on ensuring that the electronic database covering the seven treaty bodies is up to date and fully operational and accessible to both the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the High Commissioner; and on systematic updating and improvements to the web sites of the Division and the Office to enhance information about human rights in general and women's human rights in particular. The Division will continue to monitor progress with respect to integrating gender perspectives in the work of intergovernmental and expert bodies and special procedures, and will provide gender-specific input for their work.

26. Two publications on which the Division and the Office are collaborating are expected to be completed in 2004, namely the above-mentioned revision of *Gender Dimensions of Racial Discrimination*, reflecting the outcome and follow-up to the Durban Conference; and a guide on human rights and legislative practices to combat trafficking in women.

E. Inter-agency coordination

27. The Office of the High Commissioner and the Division for the Advancement of Women will continue, under the leadership of the Special Adviser on Gender

Issues and Advancement of Women, to cooperate within the framework of inter-agency mechanisms, including in respect of activities related to the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and follow-up to the report of the Secretary-General on women, peace and security (S/2002/1154); to the Millennium Development Goals; to gender and trade; and to United Nations contributions to the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women.